

MARVEL 003

FALL OF X

CAMP
MARESCA
LOPEZ

CHILDREN OF THE VAULT





They're
over an
uninhabited
area.

You ready
to go to war on
tomorrow?

Just pull
the trigger,
Bishop.

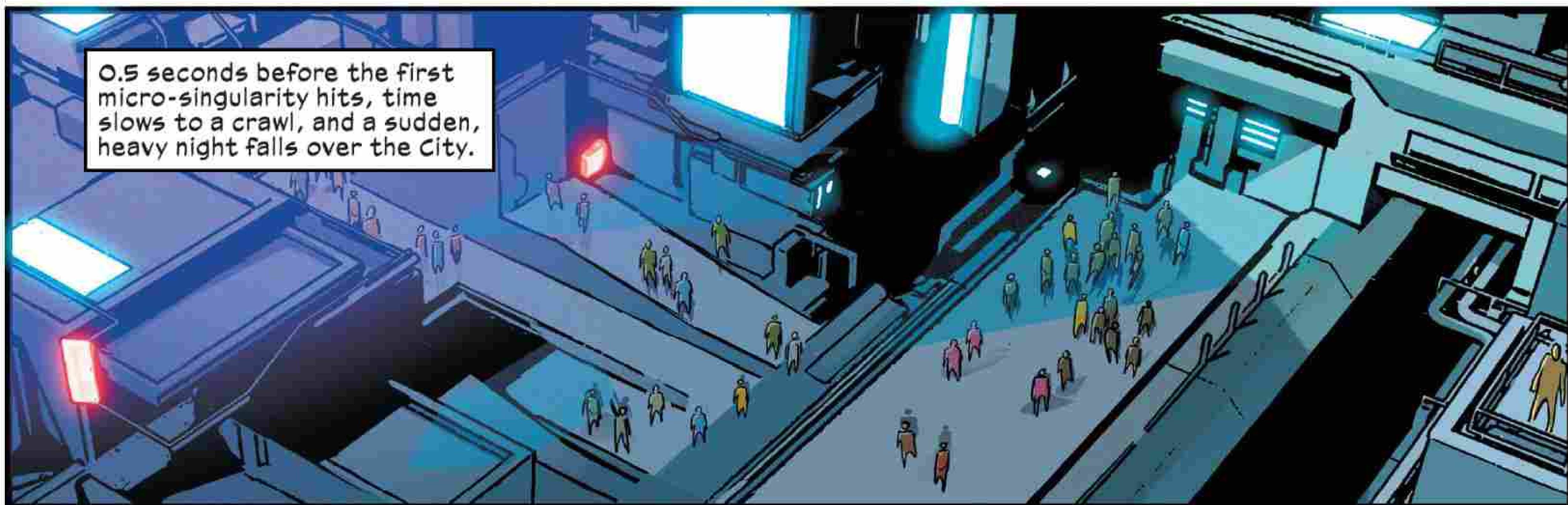
SHOOOM



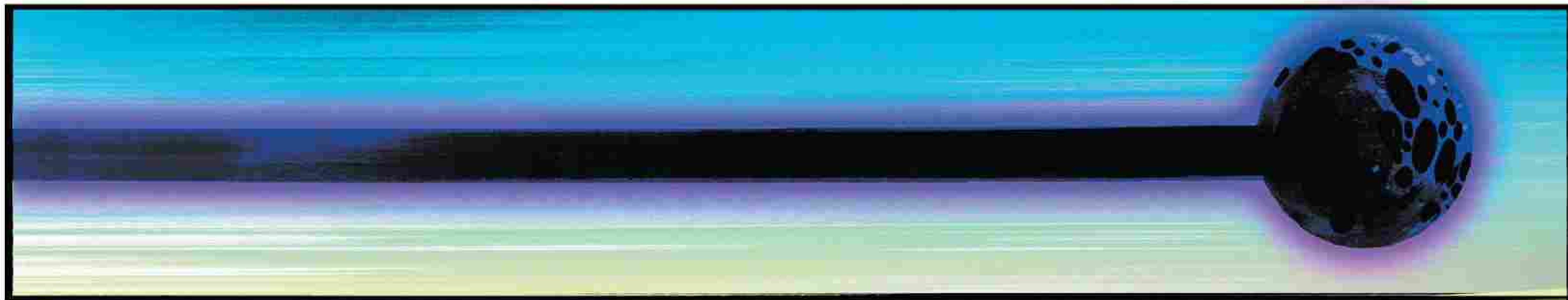
Three seconds before the first micro-singularity hits, the City-Mind picks up a small energy spike below its southern border.



Instantly, Ferro, Atomo, and Capitán are dispatched to investigate.



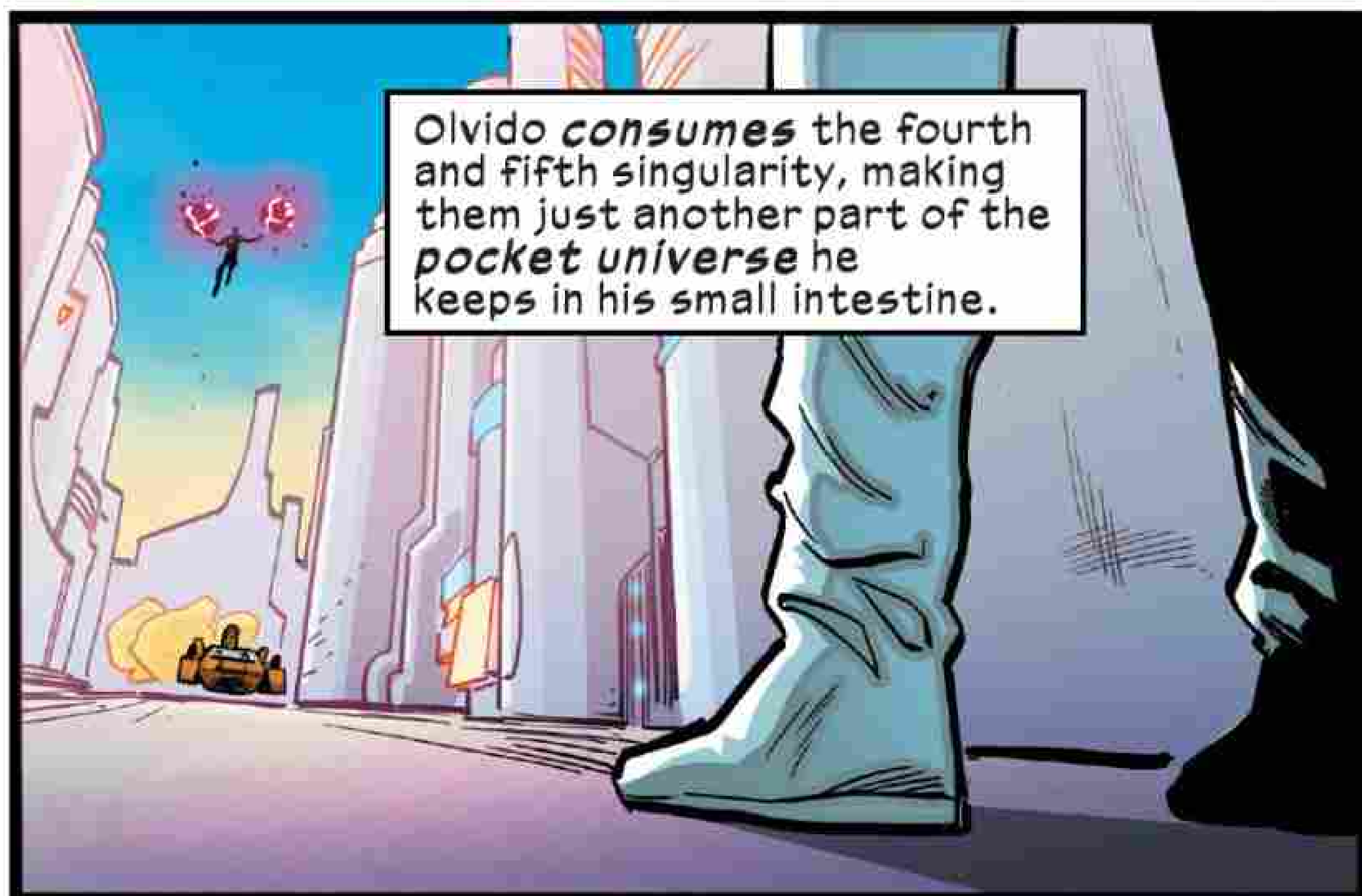
0.5 seconds before the first micro-singularity hits, time slows to a crawl, and a sudden, heavy night falls over the City.



0.1 picoseconds after the first micro-singularity hits, Ferro has already sealed the singularity in a gravity Klein bottle, and the night lifts.

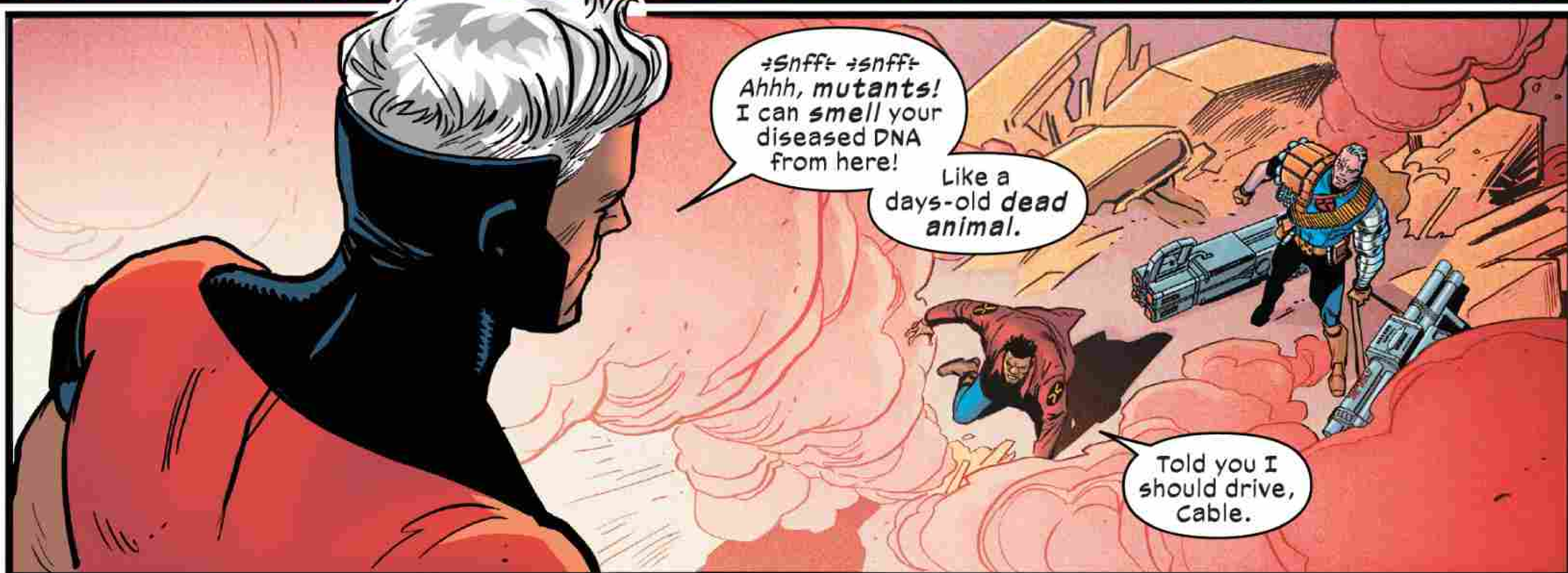
Hhh!

Eighty-three Children are dead, and twelve City blocks have ceased to exist.





Bold little monkeys, *aren't* you? Attacking us directly!



±Snff± ±snff±
Ahhh, mutants!
I can *smell* your
diseased DNA
from here!

Like a
days-old *dead*
animal.

Told you I
should drive,
Cable.



Just *two*
of you? Is
that *all*?

There are
one million of
us! What is your
"mutant power,"
a *suicidal*
streak?



Actually, my
mutant power
is *surprise*. Look
behind you.



You
think I'm so
easily--?



Emergency
omnipathic alert!
Citywide transmission
bypassing normal thought
channels and
broadcasting directly
to hypercortex!

Ninety-four
percent of solar
particle beam
absorbed/deflected,
significant damage
sustained!
Orchis forces
incoming!



The City is
under attack!
Protect the
City!



Surpriiiiise.

[fall_of]
[X]

FALL OF X

[fall_of]
[X]

CHILDREN OF THE VAULT

Become the Future

Raised in a closed vault where temporal-acceleration technology causes them to rapidly evolve, the **Children of the Vault** are super-powered beings who have long been on a collision course with the humans and mutants of Earth. As the Children evolve, each newly upgraded generation has sought to stake a claim as the planet’s superior species but have time and again been thwarted by the **X-Men**.

But recently, mutants have become scarce. The anti-mutant organization **Orchis** threatened to annihilate increasing numbers of humans for every mutant found on the planet, forcing **Charles Xavier** to psychically banish all mutants from Earth. Only a handful with training were able to resist his telepathic command, including **Cable** and **Bishop**.

Without mutants to stop them, the Children emerged from the vault and began remaking the world in their image using a **psychic virus** that bent people’s wills to the Children’s whim. Upon discovering this, Cable and Bishop hatched a plan to take the Children down...

- 1
- SERAFINA
[version 191]
- 2
- CAPITÁN
[version 204]
- 3
- FERRO
[version 51]
- 4
- PRISA
[version 38]
- 5
- LUZ
[version 67]
- 6
- ÁTOMO
[version 82]
- 7
- CABLE
- 8
- BISHOP

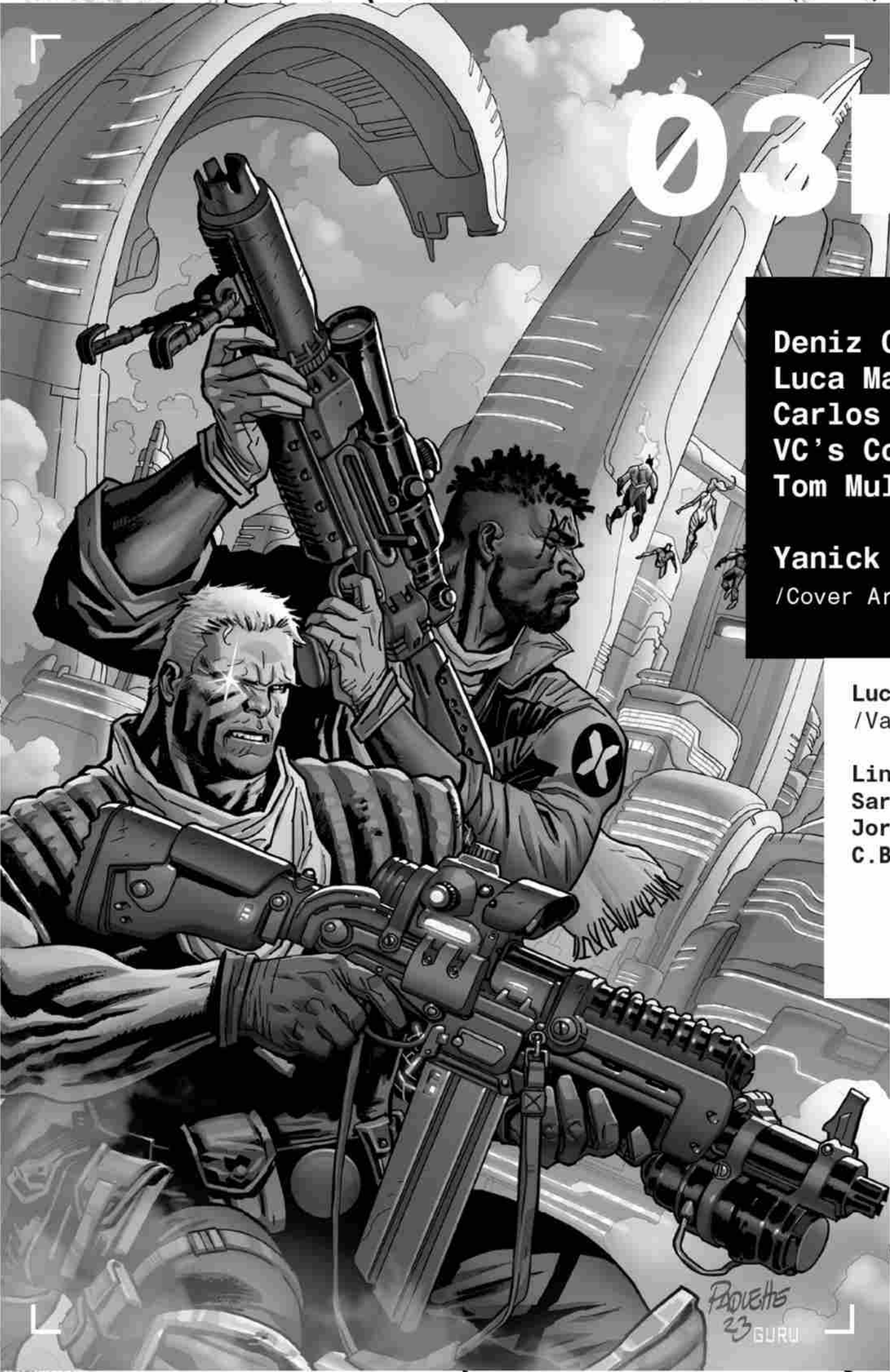


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CHILDREN OF THE VAULT

03

“WAR ON TOMORROW”



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[children_03]
[03_vault]

[fall_of]
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[children_02]
[03_vaul3]

[fall_of]
[X]

Three Hours Earlier.
The Reforge--rebuilt Orchis
Photospheric Headquarters.

It didn't take much
to get Orchis to go
to war. Just the
lightest push.

The night before, Cable placed a
carefully designed *paranoia*, along
with a few hints about what to look
for, in the mind of a mid-level
Orchis scientist while he slept.

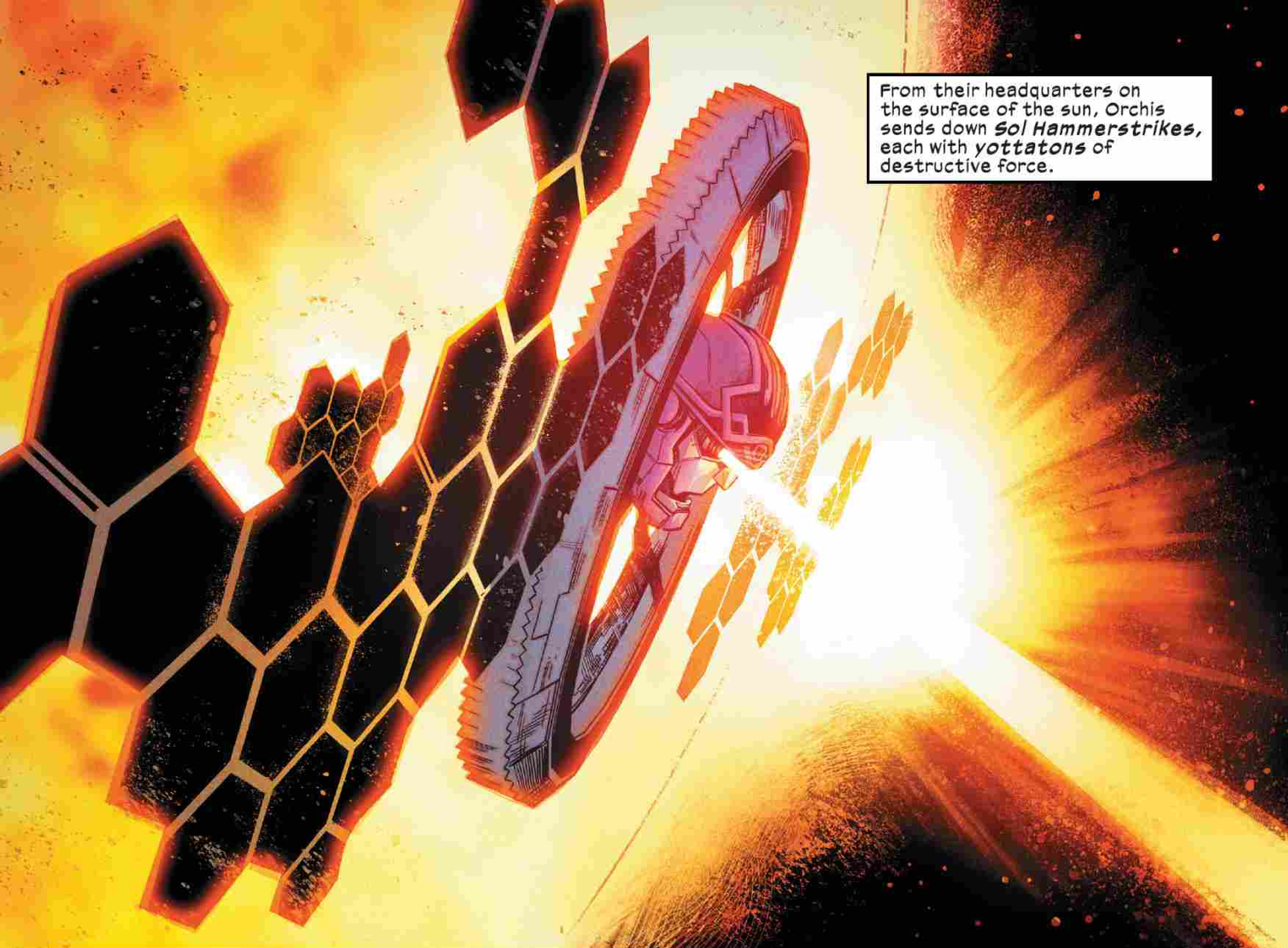
Oh
#@#&!

Security
breach detected.
Reasoning contaminated.
Judgment
compromised.

Thought
quarantine
initiated. "Automatic
war" protocol
engaged.

From that point on, all
decision-making power is given
over to giant, senseless *brains
in vats* and *quantum strategy
engines* surrounded by five feet
of shielding on all sides.

After 23 seconds
of intense analysis and
calculation, the system
concludes that the City and
its Children are the primary
threat to Orchis aims and
that every resource should
be immediately mobilized for
a frontal assault.



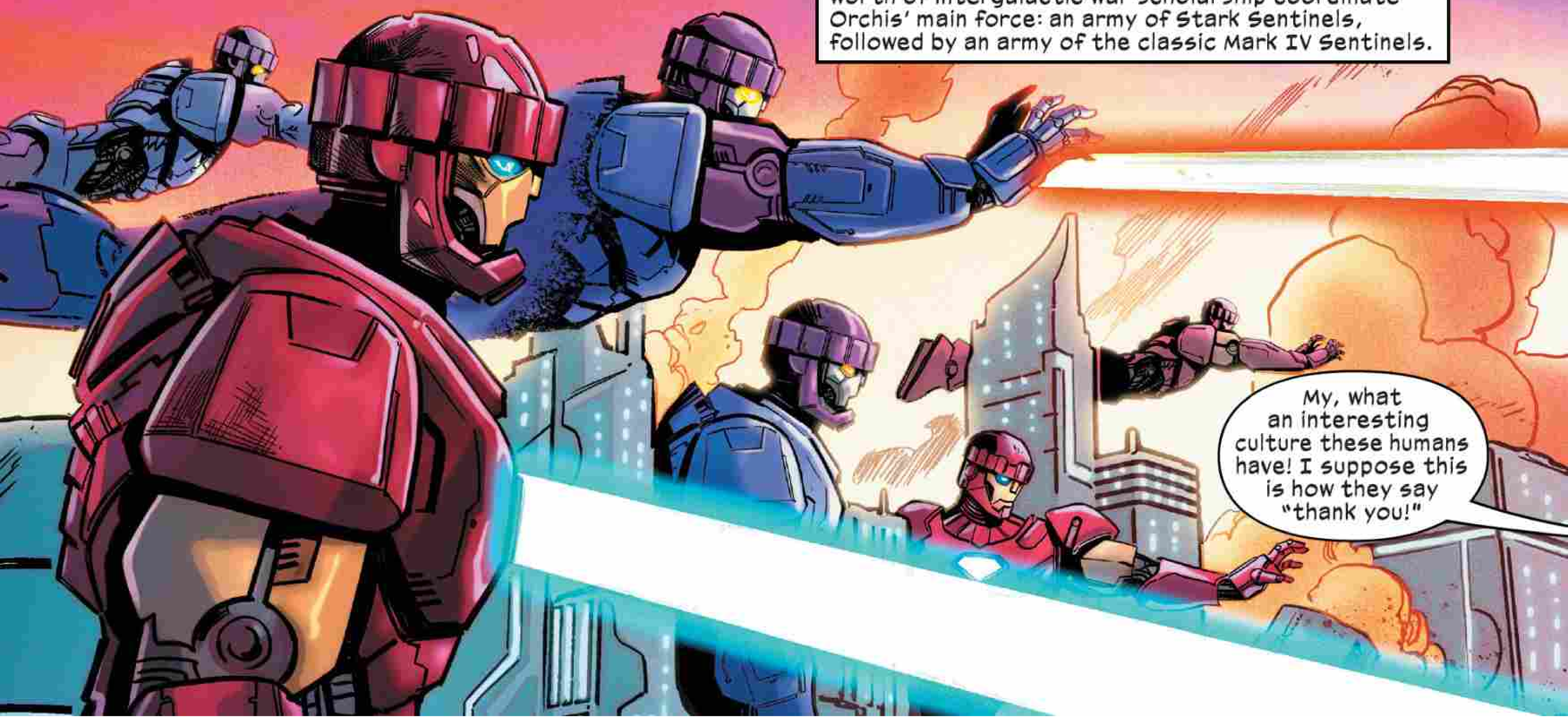
From their headquarters on the surface of the sun, Orchis sends down *Sol Hammerstrikes*, each with *yottatons* of destructive force.



The City-Mind quickly counters. Impregnable force-field batteries blossom, and deflector shields rise like flocks of birds.

What the City cannot deflect, Children such as Luz and Olvido absorb.

Next, untouched A.I.s trained on *ten million years'* worth of intergalactic war scholarship coordinate Orchis' main force: an army of *Stark Sentinels*, followed by an army of the classic *Mark IV Sentinels*.



My, what an interesting culture these humans have! I suppose this is how they say "thank you!"



Look at them, Serafina! I believe your "noble savages" mean to kill us all if they can!

I don't understand... *The Message*... This shouldn't be...



Of course it should. The ungrateful beasts don't know what's *good* for them.



You see what your *new way* gets you, Serafina?! It was *always* going to come to this!

There's no *reasoning* with humans! They turn everything into a *fight*!



Hrrmph! I'd hoped for genuine *super heroes*, but these are only cheap, mass-produced *reproductions*. How disappointing!

I can't take control of their machines... something... *protects* them...



This shouldn't be. *The Message* was *working*. This shouldn't be!

Oh, Serafina, *enough*! Look around you!



"You've lost the argument!"

You're wrong.

I'm not.



The *Omega-One Pulse Rifle* has better range, better accuracy, and more destructive force.

It's the gold standard of personal weapons of war.

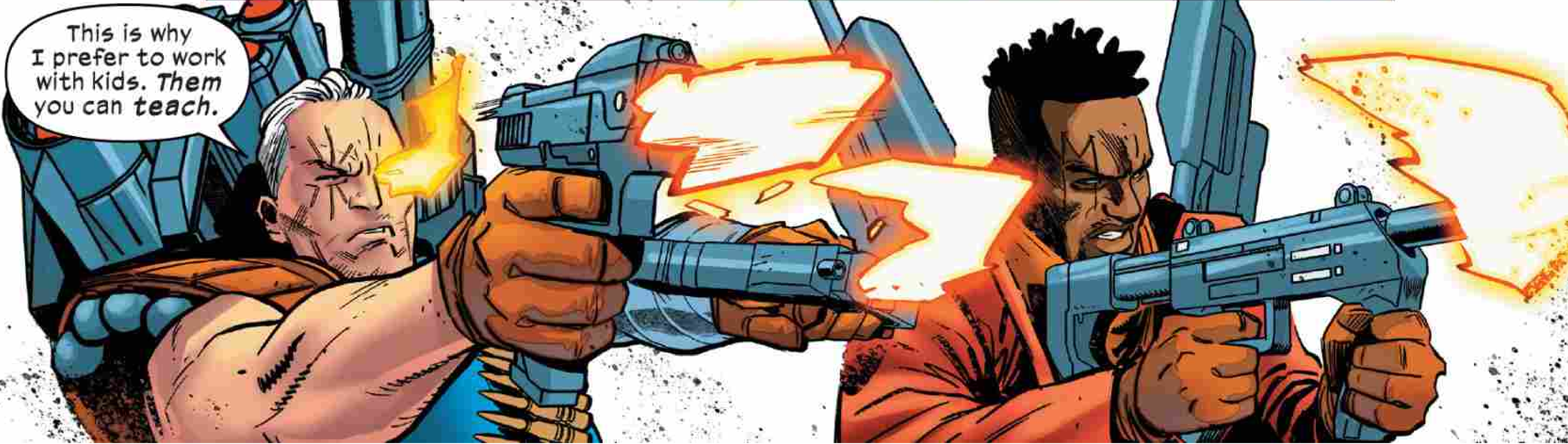
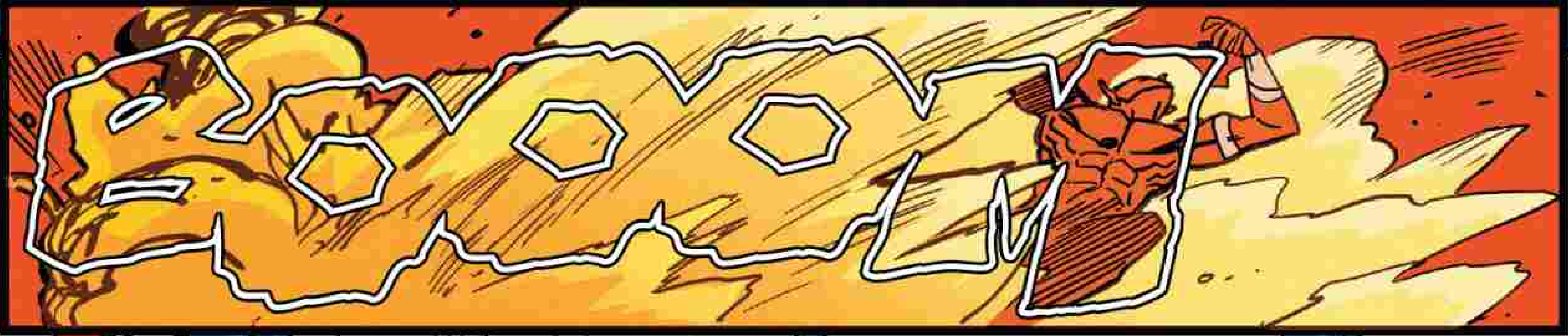
All that tells me is you haven't held a *P832 Zero-Point Plasma Canon*. Artificial star for a power source, and it's made of self-repairing smart metal.

They only made a few in the 43rd century during the *Beyonder/Phoenix War*.

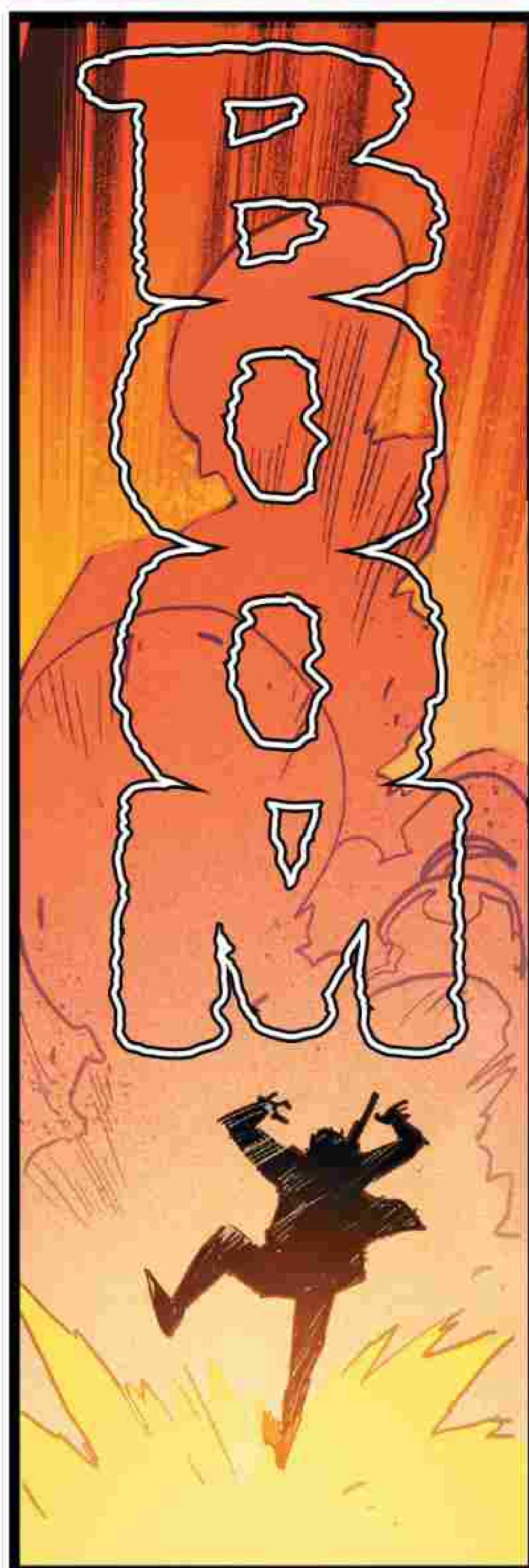


I've got *three*. The *Omega-One Pulse Rifle* is the better weapon.

If you're afraid of a real gun, *sure*.



This is why I prefer to work with kids. *Them* you can *teach*.



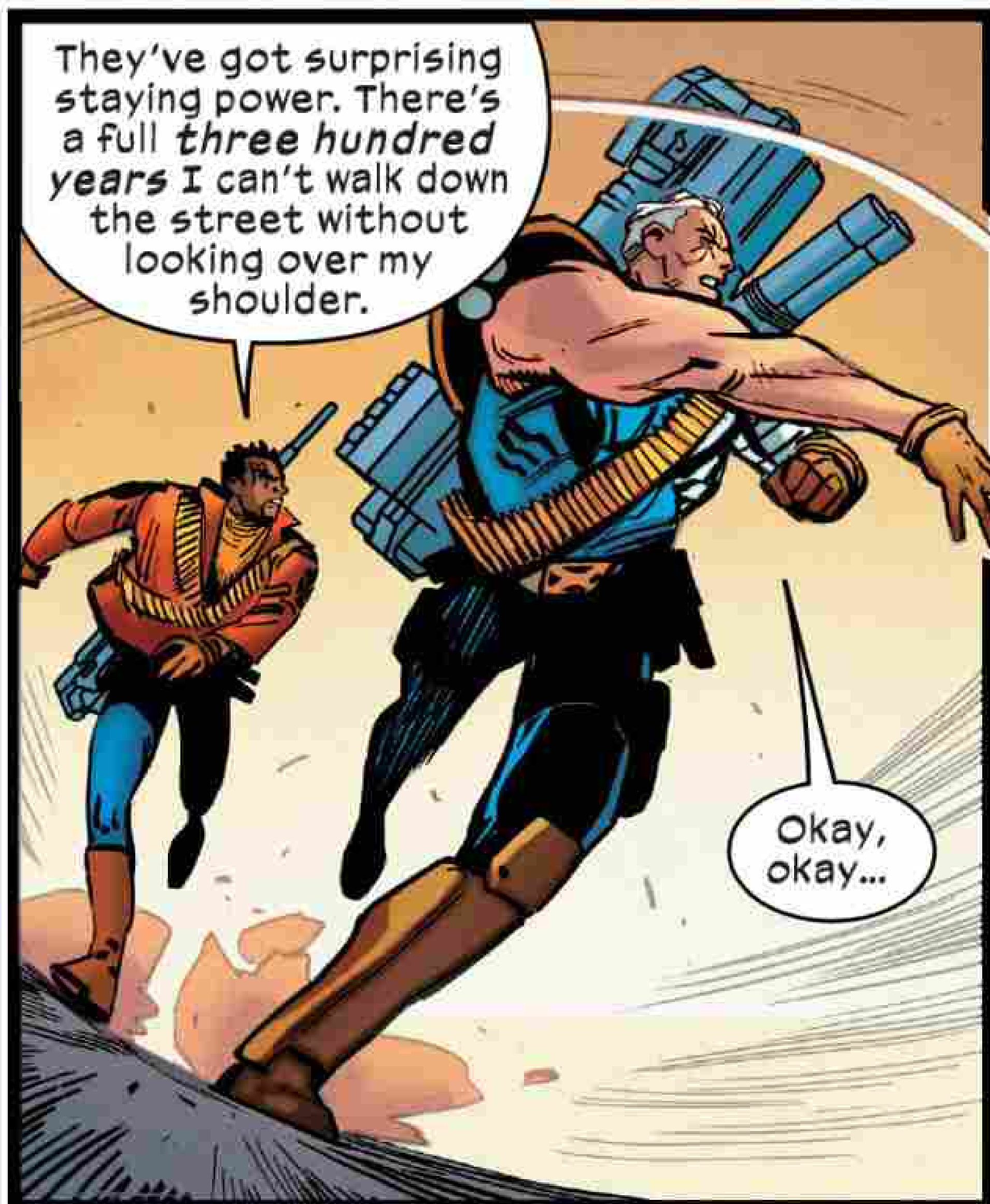


I don't deny it. But look who I'm talking to.

What was the name of that 26th-century *death cult* you started that thinks they've gotta *kill me* to save the world and enter eternal paradise?



"The Order of the Fallen Bishop." *Hah!* I'd forgotten all about that.



They've got surprising staying power. There's a full *three hundred years* I can't walk down the street without looking over my shoulder.

Okay, okay...



...I'm an awful @###@ too.



This is where we go our separate ways.

I've placed the map of the City I got from Martillo in your mind, right next to the sense memory of the first time you got shot.

So you don't forget.

#@%#!



I'm counting on you, Bishop. Against my better judgment.

You don't trust me, and I don't *blame* you. But after all we've been through...all we've *done* to each other...

...have you ever known anything to stop me once I've set my mind?



Fair point.



To Hope:

They say that you are dead. But they don't know what I know.

They don't know that, once, we ran from roaches the size of men. Do you remember? They were everywhere on that dying Earth, flying through the air on wings that made helicopter noises, crawling on all fours sixes with antenna angling back and forth in front of your face like angry fishing poles. **He'd** tipped them off, of course. To drive us out. Lucas Bishop was relentless and creative as the devil himself.

It was hell there, 150 degrees during the day and dry. We ran for cover and hid under rocks, dying of thirst. We laid on our bellies, listening to our breath for hours at a time. I'd been badly wounded, and you took care of me. When you could get them alone, you speared screaming roach-men out of the sky, and we ate them raw, afraid a cookfire might draw attention. We drank their thick, bitter blood to satisfy our thirst and you made yourself an armor and me a brace out of their inedible exoskeletons. You were 8 years old. Do you remember?

The point is you survived. You did what you had to. Under intolerable conditions, in places where nothing was supposed to live, you lived. They say that you are dead, but they don't know what I know.

I'm sorry, Hope. None of this should have happened. I should have seen the gala, the gates, everything coming. I should have been able to protect you. I should have **known**. But the whole timeline is in upheaval...not as it should be. Something has made a mess of time. Which is no excuse.

I've searched and found no sign of you. The histories are no help. Fragmented and contradictory, even in the best of times, they give only broad strokes. And these are not the best of times. I failed you, Hope.

And now they say that you are dead, and I can't prove them wrong. But they don't know what I know.

They don't know that the past is no more set than the future. That history isn't big on details, even the fate of a couple of failed messiahs. That as a girl, you speared giant roaches screaming from the sky.

They say that you are dead, but you and I, we've been to hell and back before. It's nothing new for us. Wherever you are, I believe that you will return. Call it **hope** if you have to.

And when you return, I'll be here waiting for you. So, take your time, Hope. Do what you have to. I am sending out this telepathic message in a bottle to tell you: If it takes a million years, I'll be here. It doesn't matter who's against me; one million supermen, the endless armies of Orchis, or the laws of space and time. Whatever it takes, **I will be here waiting for you.**

Even if I have to deal with the devil himself.

Love,
Cable

Intercepted & translated into language from self-propagating "Reaching-Searching" thoughtform
See: "Askani: Cry of the Burning Mother to Missing Fledgling"



I sense forces
unaccounted for
acting on events. Switching
to *Over-sight* to better
assess the situation.



I can now
see through
time, across
space, into
hearts!

I
see...



...humankind's
hopes falling from
the sky like *ancient
wrecks...*

I see
Capitân, Cortês-
class *genocide pirate*,
smile for the first
time in *eight
incarnations*.

Yes! More! Send
your super heroes!
Send your aliens! Send
your gods and
monsters!

Send
everything!
**Send them
all!**

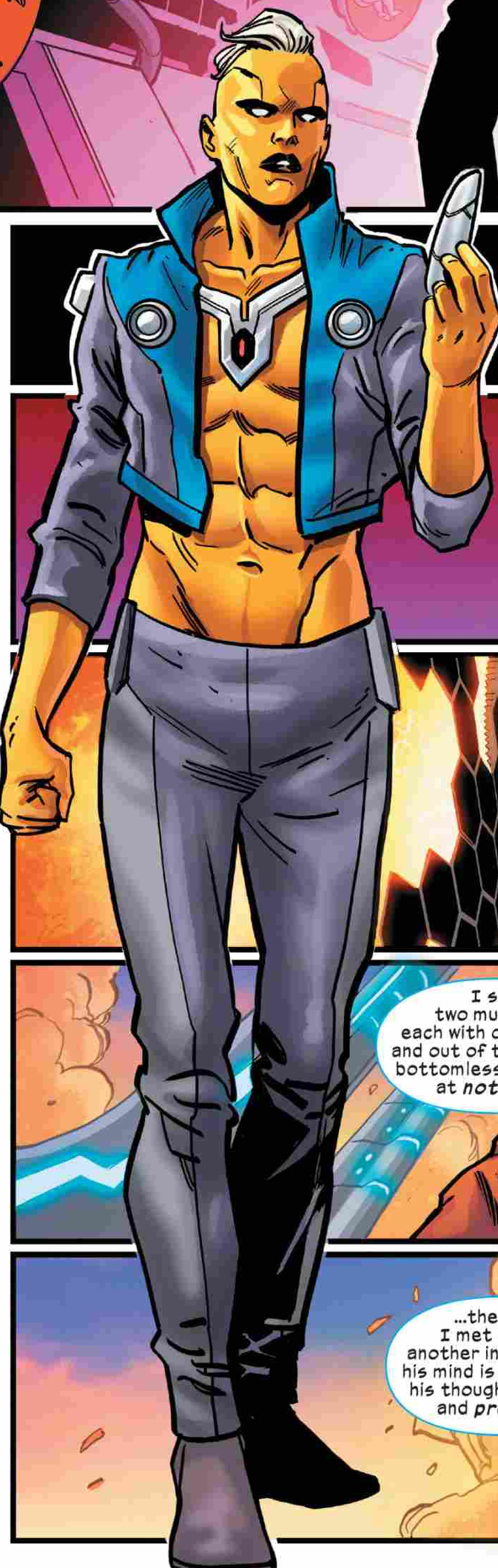
He is
*conquer
encoded*. In
every life, he
lives for
this.



I see the worst impulses of my society unleashed...

In your last incarnation, you threw an antimatter tantrum that left City blocks 81 through 101 *permanently uninhabitable*.

It was decided that we Children had evolved *beyond* the need for such indiscriminately destructive archetypes, and your line was *discontinued*.



But it now seems we were *premature*. The times again call for murder and megadeath...

...*extinction by fire*.

The City welcomes you back, *Muerte-13*. Only 45 seconds old and already the future is in your hands.

Make your Madre proud.



High above us, on the surface of the sun, I see a nascent *war mind*, an ancient precursor to our *City*, orchestrating humanity's hopeless counter-attacks...



I see two mutants, each with one foot in and out of time. One is *bottomless*, he stops at *nothing*...

...the other I met once, in another incarnation... his mind is an *armory*, his thoughts *deadly* and *precise*...





I see
that we will
win, that
we **cannot**
lose.



But then
I see...behind
all of it, behind
everything...

...I see
something
else...



Oh.
Oh.



Enormous...
exterior to space...
arranging events
like *flowers*...

...immense
intelligence
thinking vast
and terrible
thoughts...!



Serafina!

...Oh, it's
coming, it's
coming, it's
always
been...



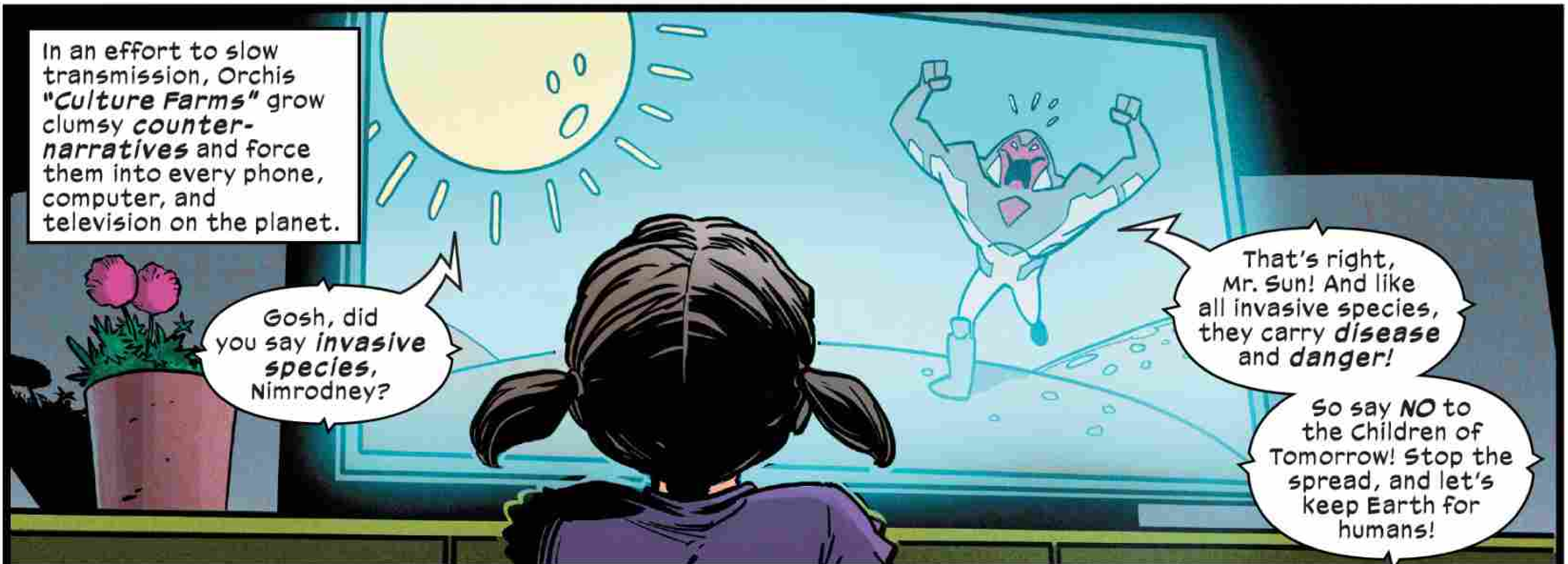
...Dominion...



As war rages in the City, the Message *multiplies*! It spreads from *mouth to ear* and *eye to eye*!

It thrives in the dark fissures of societies!

BECOME THE FUTURE CHILDREN



In an effort to slow transmission, Orchis "Culture Farms" grow clumsy *counter-narratives* and force them into every phone, computer, and television on the planet.

Gosh, did you say *invasive species*, Nimrodney?

That's right, Mr. Sun! And like all *invasive species*, they carry *disease* and *danger*!

So say **NO** to the Children of Tomorrow! Stop the spread, and let's keep Earth for humans!



When their *alternative narratives* fail, Orchis simply turns off the *internet*.

Hey, what the hell?! My thesis!

But the Message *adapts*. The Message *mutates*.



Early in its life cycle, the Message is limited by *context*, but later, it can be *anywhere* and *anything*. It can be dinner plans and love letters and father-daughter heart-to-hearts.

You know you can always "Become the Future," don't you?



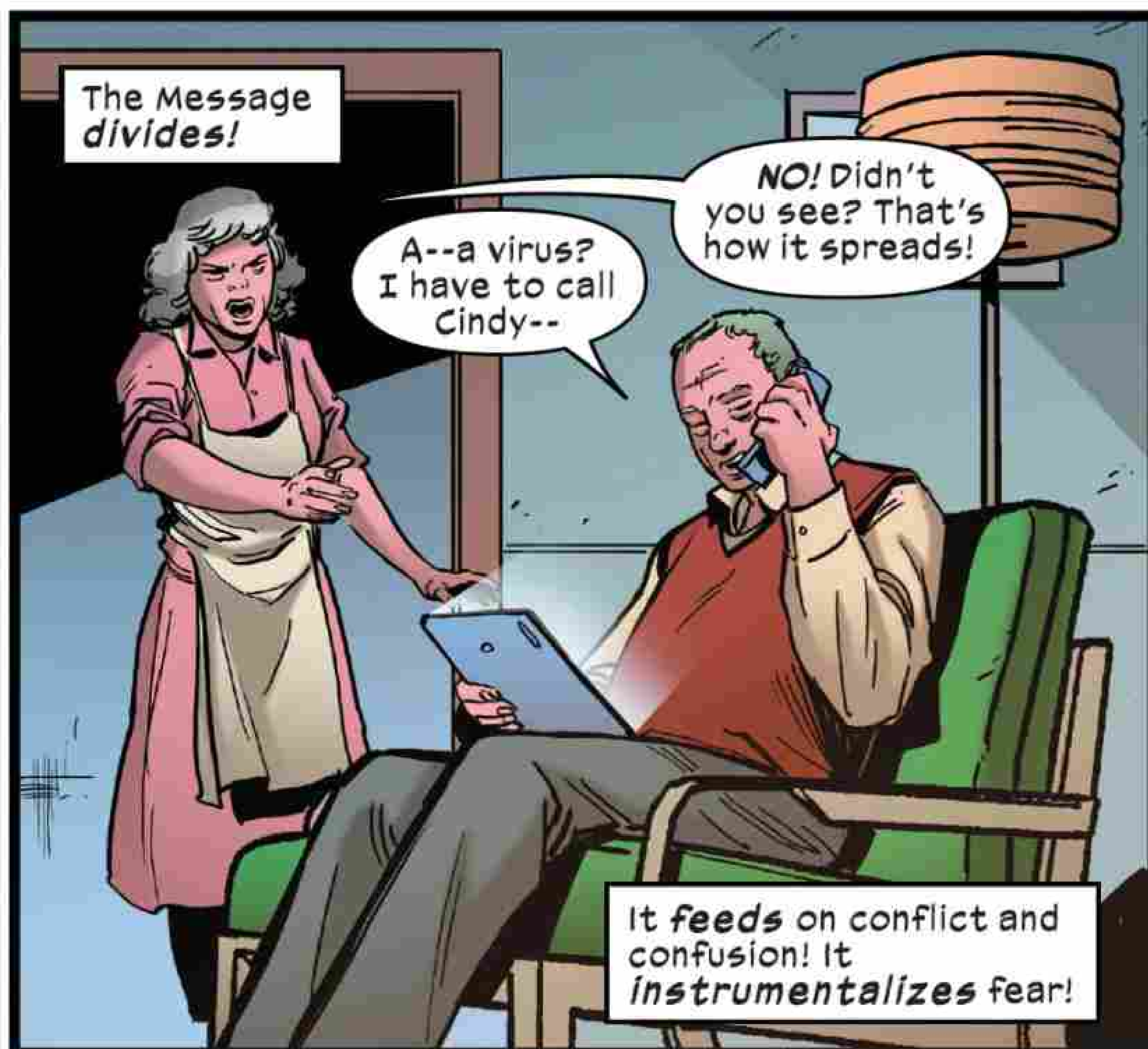
Any seemingly innocent question can be *seething* with dangerous hidden meanings!

Why *wouldn't* you want to become the future?



It has *no purpose* beyond *proliferation*! When the Message encounters resistance, it changes form to suit its needs, even arguing its own *antithesis*!

So *what* if it's true? Maybe humanity doesn't *deserve* a future. Maybe we should all make room for something *better*.



The Message divides!

A--a virus?
I have to call
Cindy--

NO! Didn't
you see? That's
how it spreads!

It feeds on conflict and
confusion! It
instrumentalizes fear!



The Message makes
an argument out of
everything!

She's
our daughter,
Louise!

We're not
supposed to talk
to anyone!

It lives in the
voices of the people
you love most!

Everyday conversations
explode into full-blown
discourse without warning!



Then what
are you doing
right now?!



Oh
god!

The Message pits
brother against
brother, husband
against wife, mother
against child!



You can't go out like
that! We're not
supposed to go
out at all!

You should
watch less TV,
Mom. It's rotting
your brain.

The Children
have done nothing
but good since they
got here. They're
going to fix what's
wrong with our
whole @###@-up
world.



It's a virus, Ellen!
You're going to
spread it!

Good!
I'm not
afraid of the
future!

It takes the most
basic healthy human
impulses--the desire
to communicate,
concern for family
and fellow man--and
it turns them to
inhuman purpose.

The Message won't be contained! Its evangelists are victims! It will grow until everything is the Message and the Message is everything!



Become
the future!

THE
CHILDREN
ARE OUR
FUTURE

BECOME
THE
FUTURE

[fall of]
[X]

BISHOP WAR JOURNAL

Telepathic Treatment Chamber

Head crowded lately. Filled with faces/voices in fire. For weeks after gala heard Xavier screaming "go to gate." One night woke up halfway to Manhattan gate, w/o memory of how I got there.

Today in modified interrogation room watched vein dance on Cable's forehead as he sterilized my thoughts. Quietly repeated phrase, "What is, is" over & over. Tried to hide it but looked exhausted. Thought he might pass out.

When procedure finished was filled with comforting/familiar feeling. Sudden clarity, like parting haze. Spent all day hating Children, making violent plans. Relieved to be self again.

X-Mansion Weapons Cache

Beneath baseball field Cable keeps weapons of past/future destruction. Me = kid in candy store. Saw: Kree/Sh'iar Nega-Bomb, 27th century Delta Ray Launcher, Celestial Sterilization Engine(!). How many times sliding into home only few feet away from Armageddon? They call me "dangerous"?

Hard to leave so much behind but took only what could carry. Found primary objective hidden under 38th century "Psimitar." Placed in pocket and made way back, carefully watching steps.

Everything so fragile. One slip all that separates us from end of the world.

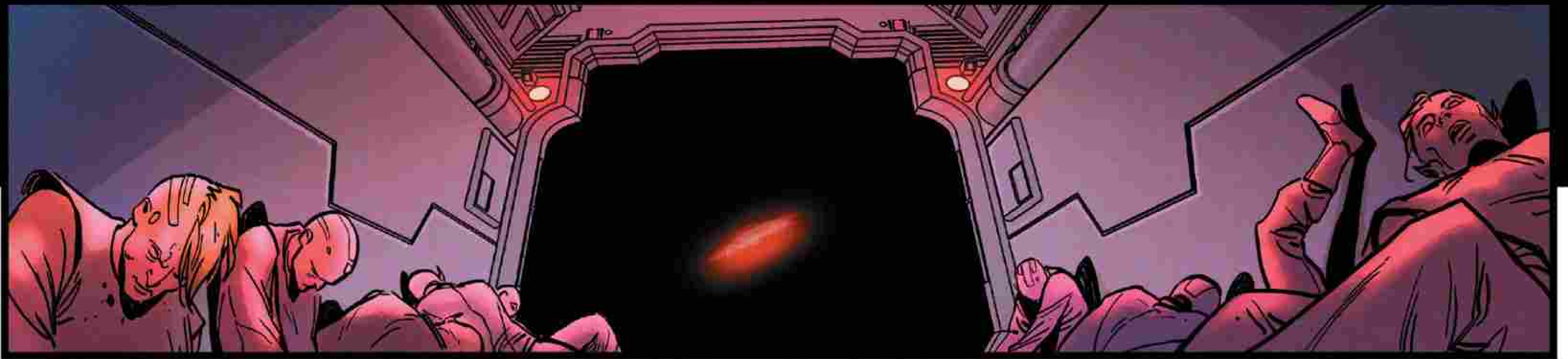
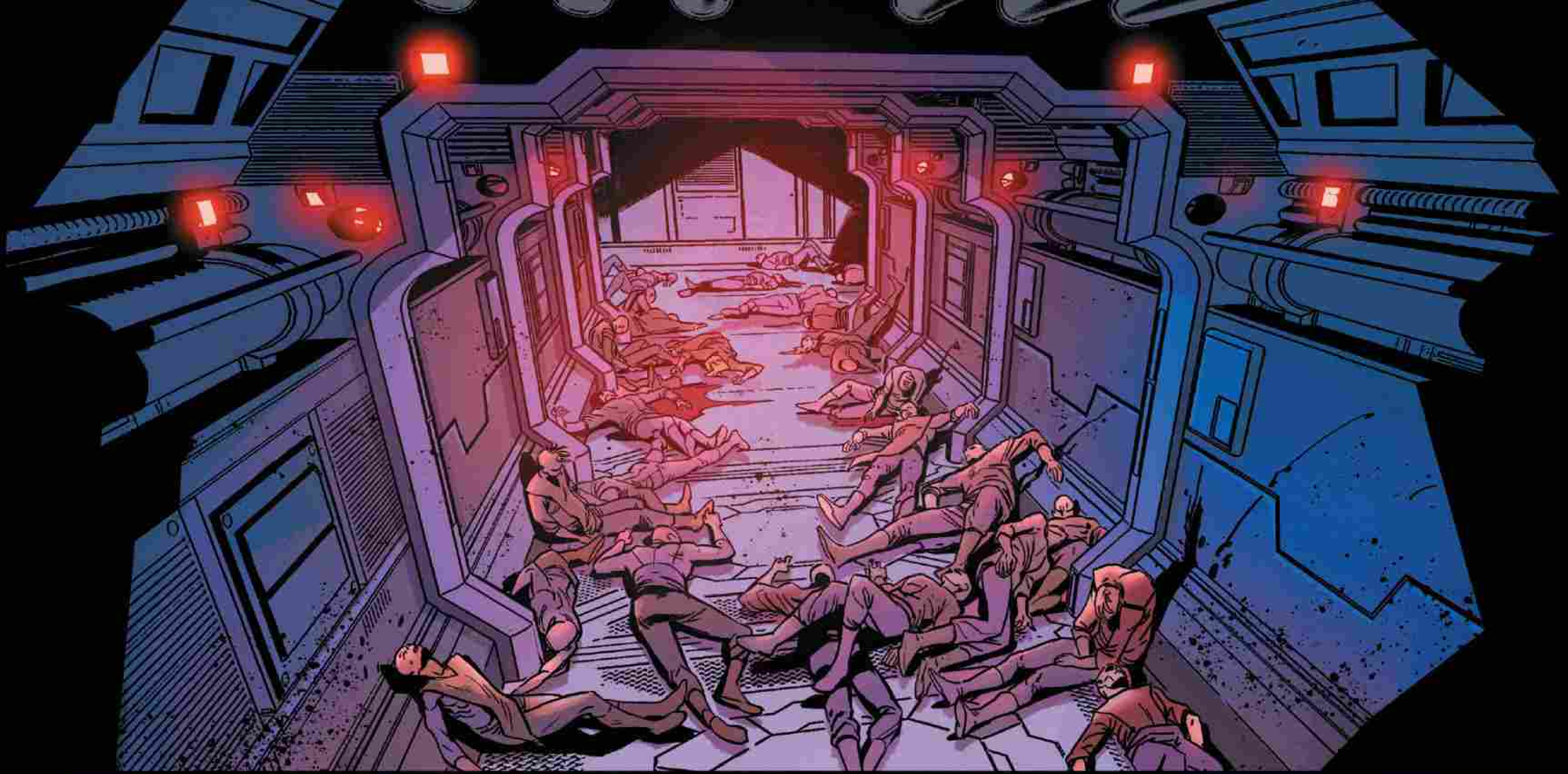
12 Hours to City

Tomorrow go to put Children in place. Spent all day checking weapons/studying plans/avoiding Cable when possible. Feel good. Feel clear + light. Before fight all fades to nagging background hum: Orchis, Cable, Xavier, the Children + the City, mind-viruses, brainwashing books, past mistakes, faces screaming in the fire. Before fight feel most myself + alive.

1 Hour to City

If you knew billions would die, how far would you go to save them?

How could you ever go far enough?



TINK TINK









Nobody
held a *gun* to
their head.

To be concluded...

LUCA
MARRA

X-KO is MULTA for all -iQ≡-T!

FOLLOW THE FALL:



04

≡○? ? ≡
≡□□□≡



CHILDREN OF THE VAULT #3

ATONISHING ICEMAN #3

INVINCIBLE IRON MAN #11

ALPHA FLIGHT #3

DARK X-MEN #3

JEAN GREY #3

REALM OF X #3

UNCANNY AVENGERS #3

UNCANNY SPIDER-MAN #2

X-MEN #28

X-FORCE #46



KAMIC RIDER
MARIKA